

Lifelong Learning and University-based Business Schools

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CURATION
PORTABILITY

Future skills

Job mobility

Investment

Accessibility

embrace risk

Credentialing

SWOT ANALYSIS REPORT

INTRODUCTION

A cross-sector, qualitative and quantitative intelligence gathering report from AACSB, IEDP and UNICON—to guide and inform university-based business schools on the transformative potential of lifelong learning as a driver and shaper of future business strategy

Four to five years ago—pre-industry transmuting global pandemic—the concept of applying lifelong learning principles to business education, in order to update and better enable it to meet the needs of modern professional learners—was already gaining traction.

The quickening pace of change, coupled with adoption of 4IR technologies such as AI and automation, blockchain and big data, were starting to radically reshape the employability needs of both organizations and individuals.

A growing trend toward net zero carbon was increasing demand for new skills around greener practices. Digitization was in full-flow, with a host of new capabilities and expertise required. The need for every layer of the modern workforce to upgrade and go on upgrading perishable and semi-durable skills was already being felt, as was the growing skills gap it created.

Other contextual factors were fuelling the demand for reskilling and upskilling too: the rise of non-linear career paths; historical under investment by governments in adult education; aging populations staying work-engaged longer; and a growing market for online learning—driven partly by digital-native millennials rising to decision-maker level in their organizations. All of these forces combined to form a compelling case for an urgent and imminent shake-up in executive education.

The traditional, front-loaded educational model—with funding and time investment skewed heavily towards the 18-24 age bracket, and with skills updated all-too-rarely subsequent to that period—was, even five years ago, a product no longer meeting the needs of the customer, nor the wider stakeholder needs of employers and industries.

Similarly, in learning and development, there was a narrow focus—in this case typically concentrated on an organization’s ‘high-potential’ talent, often to the detriment of the wider talent pool. Executive learning for the great majority, was experienced irregularly and disjointedly, where it did occur. This was an outdated status quo—and the feeling of futuristic thinkers in the industry at least, hinted at a massive amount of untapped potential.

Like so many existing and underlying trends in society and business, the pandemic accelerated these transformative forces in education. An explosive tipping point in digitization continues to touch many aspects of our lives—from remote work, to remote medical appointments, to even greater levels of ecommerce.

In university-based business education there is a tangible appetite to reimagine and reinvent how executive education works in a post-pandemic world. Lifelong learning—with its promise of knowledge, skills, and support spread over years and available just-in-time and on-demand throughout careers (and beyond)—was already a popular concept as an antidote to an outdated model, and is now viewed by many in the sector as the preferred organizing principle around which a transformed executive education offering can be built for the future.

A STRATEGIC QUESTION

The disruptive market forces outlined here pose long-term, strategic questions for higher-ed leaders, executive education teams, and corporate talent leaders alike, to evaluate and explore.

For university-based business schools, a pivot towards lifelong learning will require new products, new services, new business models, and new technologies, which in turn require time, effort, and financial investment to get right—therefore key decisions lie ahead.

To guide and support the strategizing required at this important juncture, AACSB, IEDP, and UNICON have partnered to produce this research report, and make it available to decision-makers across executive education.

The central findings of the report stem from a comprehensive SWOT analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats presented by lifelong learning as a driver and shaper of future business strategy for the sector.

Our shared hope for this initiative is to provide substantive research for stakeholders in executive education to feed in to their own decision-making processes, and ultimately to play a role in improving the impact of executive education in the round—which is a shared goal of AACSB, IEDP, and UNICON.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

In 2022 IEDP conducted qualitative interviews with a range of voices from the supply and demand sides of executive education—from deans and presidents of business schools, to directors and heads of executive education, and CLOs and heads of talent at large organizations.

These were in-depth interviews with field experts in their relevant roles at: Goldman Sachs, Volkswagen Group, New York Life, Hyatt Hotels, TBWA, Pitney Bowes, and Cargill, on the demand side; Leeds Illuminate and the Financial Times as key cross-sector observers; and IMD, INSEAD, Tsinghua University, UVA Darden Executive Education & Lifelong Learning, Michigan Ross, Columbia Business School, Illinois Tech, and IE University, on the supply side.

In addition to this qualitative data the report leverages a wide research sweep, with supporting quantitative data and insights gathered from a wide range of trusted sources, from WEF, to Deloitte, McKinsey, PwC, Carrington Crisp, and others—along with AACSB's and UNICON's own research.

HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

From a large set of qualitative data this report distils a concise set of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, identified by our expert sources as important considerations around the topic of lifelong learning in executive education—and in particular to its suitability as a core strategy for university-based business schools.

Within the four main SWOT categories, these points are ranked in terms of importance, based on salience and frequency within the data. They are also sub-categorized for ease of reference, and tagged/displayed as '**supply**', '**demand**', or '**both supply and demand**' – according to the side of the market they most closely relate to. The aim is to make this research as easy to digest, visualize, share, and make use of as we can.

Each SWOT point is presented here with some key supporting quotes from the interview data, alongside statistical data from our quantitative research sweep, where relevant and useful.

Use the panel below to **jump to the four SWOT summary pages** where you can drill down and access the full set of insights under each category by clicking on any heading or sub-heading.

You will find **back buttons at the top of each page** to navigate back to each SWOT summary page, or here to the main 'Jump to' menu.

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JUMP TO...



STRENGTHS



WEAKNESSES



OPPORTUNITIES



THREATS



STRENGTHS

KEY

SUPPLY

DEMAND

BOTH SUPPLY AND DEMAND

MARKET STRENGTHS

Selling points, positional strengths, and competitive advantage.

Trust

University-based executive education providers are trusted subject authorities, trusted sources of evidence-based content, and trusted for quality of provision.

Research

Research is the USP and differentiator for university-based business schools versus non-traditional providers—as well as the means by which they can push boundaries.

Market clarity

Non-traditional providers often offer multiple services (e.g. professional services). University-based executive education has clarity of a single purpose: learning.

Outdated status quo

Consensus on all sides that the old model of degree learning with minimal updating afterward is no longer fit for purpose.

Credentialing power

University-based business schools are recognized authorities in quality assessment—with trust, prestige, status, and brand value attached.

Demographics

Shifting demographics include aging workforces in many international economies, with many/most staying engaged in work longer.

Skills landscape

Macro trends: climate change, net zero, social justice, cyber security, remote work, DEI, 4IR technologies like AI, big data and robotics—all herald massive new demand for upskilling and reskilling.

Hiring costs

Hiring for specialist skillsets such as data analysis is expensive. In-house, on-the-job skills development is a cost-effective alternative.

Talent today

Investing in people to increase motivation, retention, and employability, has never been more expected, nor in higher demand.

Talent tomorrow

New trends in talent management align with lifelong learning: potential-based hiring, learning as a key competency, DEI, and a shift in focus from elite 'executives' to the wider talent pool.

Remote tipping point

New foundation of online learning capabilities in organizations, plus positive attitudinal shifts towards flexible working patterns.

Combats critique: 'too theoretical'

Combats critique of universities as 'too theoretical'—with more vocational, hard skill credentials available.

Combats critique: 'elitist'

Combats critique of universities as restrictive of access.

Flexibility

On-demand is no longer a trend, but a thriving economy in its own right—with flexibility for the end user the driving force.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Existing strategic alignment with lifelong learning – in people, skills, and operations.

Curation power

Power, trust and authority to filter, curate, and verify an over-abundance of available content.

Instructional design

Expertise to structure content in coherent pathways and frameworks, correctly sequenced by instructional designers.

Deep learning skills

Expert advice not just on what to read, but how to read—learning (and unlearning and relearning) as a skillset.

Purpose and values

University-based business schools have an ironclad belief in the importance of learning and the positive impact education can have on society.

Longevity

History and experience in creating compelling learning experiences for demanding audiences, with a wide variety of pedagogies, ensuring impact and proving ROI.

Convening power

There is an enduring need for in-person provision (including blended and hybrid)—with the time and space for reflection and interaction.

Faculty

The straight sight line from research to classroom—with those who create knowledge, teaching it directly.

Applied learning

Long-term trend in action oriented learning in executive education—aligns well with applied learning opportunities.

Future of work

Universities play a central role in developing 4IR technologies—with business schools positioned well to teach associated skills.

Variety

Universities sit across vast varieties of content and expertise—aligning well with the varied skills and knowledge demands of lifelong learning.

Innovation

Executive education has a history of innovation within the business school structure—e.g. in program design, experiential learning, partnerships.

Shorter programs

Existing trend in executive education towards shorter, more focused programs.

Alumni networks

University-based business schools have an existing audience for lifelong learning in their alumni networks.

LEARNER OUTCOMES

Positive outcomes for employees, employers, wider business, and wider society.

Lower costs

Scaled new revenue models can bring lower price points for learners.

Knowledge acceleration

Accelerated transfer of thought-leadership to the frontline of work where it can be usefully applied.

Time efficiencies

Less time away from the office and family for learners.

Record of learning

Learning pathways of stackable / portable credentials offer a detailed record of learning for employers.

Skills signalling

For employees, a record of learning allows easy signalling of marketable skillsets to enhance employability.

Less overlap

Recording of granular skills acquisition helps avoid duplication of learning across one's lifetime.

Laser skills targeting

Focused learning for specific short-term needs e.g. 'Social Media Marketing Tactics' vs. 'Digital Marketing.'



WEAKNESSES

KEY

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INTERNAL-STRUCTURAL

Existing internal/structural weaknesses (and challenges/barriers).

Teaching capacity

There is a limit to faculty capacity to deliver and teach more, whilst maintaining current research levels.

Lack of agility

A desire to innovate in academia can contrast with a slowness in adapting and adopting new ideas.

Resistance

Transformative change is difficult for any organization, with university-based providers no exception.

Scale of change

Large-scale change needed—with adaptation required to content, modalities, revenue models, and culture.

Faculty training

Skills within academia need updating around: new mindsets, new technologies, new audiences, new formats.

Structural impediments

Existing degree-focused governance structures can inhibit the freedom to innovate.

Practitioners

New practical topics may require more practitioner faculty members and researchers.

Research agenda

Wider and deeper skills offerings require broader research agendas.

EXTERNAL-MARKET

Challenges/barriers within the current market.

Language gap

Definitions of 'lifelong learning' vary widely, with marked differences in meaning—notably between the supply and demand sides.

Name recognition

Demand for 'lifelong learning' by name is not yet high—while demand for the drivers behind lifelong learning are high: skills updates, flexibility etc.

Evidence

Despite the term 'lifelong learning' being coined long ago, there is a lack of existing models to point that show continuous skills acquisition across evolving careers.

Future skills

Uncertainty persists around the skills needed 5-10 years from now, with the best available analysis still unclear.

Online fatigue

Widely reported fatigue with self-directed learning, time online, and screen time.

Perception

There is a view of university-based executive education as sometimes 'heavy' i.e. intricate, time-consuming, expensive—at odds with lifelong learning's appeal.

Technology barriers

Technology can be a barrier for some older learners. Quality of user experience in general a key concern.

OPERATIONAL/DEPLOYMENT

Operational weaknesses and challenges/barriers to successful deployment.

Self-directed

Onus on learners to motivate themselves can bias those already highly engaged.

Softer skills

Online learning is currently better suited to technical and hard skills than to soft and social skills. Lifelong learning cannot focus solely on hard skills.

Fragmented delivery

Flexibility is convenient for the learner, but challenging for faculty and administrators.

Calibration

Increased diversity in learning groups (cross-industry, cross-seniority, mixed experience) makes it hard to calibrate and cater to individual needs.

Personal vs. organizational

Increased demand for personalization brings new challenges around connecting individualized pathways to organizational goals.

Personalization vs. scale

Inherent tension between personalization and scaled learning solutions.

Genuine micro learning

Some attempts at micro learning amount to slicing long-format programs into smaller pieces, rather than intentional micro learning design.

FINANCIAL

Strategic weaknesses (and challenges/barriers) based on finances.

Investment

Many associated challenges require significant investment to address—and/or new business models.

Spending power

University-based providers command smaller budgets than some competitors in the field e.g. marketing spend.

Research expense

Research creation is an on-going expense for business schools which their competitors do not have.

Cost vs. scale

How does university-based executive education scale what is traditionally a premium product to mid- and junior-level management, without a drop-off in quality?



OPPORTUNITIES

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MARKET CONDITIONS

Opportunities presented by micro and macro market trends.

Just-in-time

The demand for skills and knowledge today has a time horizon of months rather than years.

Job mobility

Faster turnover rates, 'the great resignation,' and a rise in non-linear career trajectories are greatly increasing demand for upskilling and reskilling.

Pace of change

Complexification, rapid change, disruption and instability all greatly increase the need for continually updating skillsets and support for people.

Popular trend

The view that professionals should keep learning and updating their skills throughout a career and lifetime, is now widely held and popular.

Scale of demand

The OECD estimates that 1.1 billion jobs are liable to be radically transformed by technology in the next decade.

IMPACT

Opportunities for greater impact – for employees, employers, wider business and wider society.

Accessibility

Scope to enable many more people to reach their potential—with remote learning and lower costs promising 'democratization' of learning.

Inclusion

Greater inclusion for under-represented populations—from diverse socio-economic

backgrounds, to introverted personality types, to gender, race, and age groups—broadening the definition of who belongs at business school.

In-career support

Opportunity to map learning onto career trajectories—with skills/advice/training delivered at the point of need, and at specific career steps.

Portability

Transferable credentials, recognized widely across industries, geographies, and between providers.

Stackability

A framework for accumulating knowledge, with micro credentials acquired and presented in a portfolio of skills.

Pathways

Opportunity to tackle the disjointedness of education and training, bringing them together in coherent pathways for learners and employers alike.

Learning as core

Opportunity to promote learning agility as a core competency—with critical skills of learning made central to the curriculum.

ROI

Opportunity to address a long-standing challenge for executive education—the proving of ROI—with lower costs, practical learning outcomes, and quicker results.

GROWTH

Opportunities for growth – audience growth, revenue growth, and market growth.

New market layers

Opportunity to reach under-catered mid- and junior-level management layers, and support and advance careers.

Cascading

Cascading or large-scale deployment of learning, with thousands rather than hundreds of employees engaged—with implications for culture change and other transformation projects.

Long-term partnerships

Stronger partnerships between organizations and business schools—with capability-building, deeper understanding of needs based on data, and long-term value creation.

New revenues

Diversified revenues through new streams and augmenting existing streams.

Market segmentation

Opportunity to identify and target new market segments.

Entrepreneurship

Opportunity for business schools to operate as 'academic entrepreneurs.'

INNOVATION

Opportunities to innovate and build new value.

Collaboration

Cross-school, cross-discipline—many of the toughest problems facing business today require interdisciplinary solutions e.g. between 'supply chain' and 'robotics' experts.

Partnerships

Universities are positioned well to orchestrate a wide variety of potential partnerships; cross-industry, EdTech, ecosystems, consortia.

Market driven

University-based executive education content is traditionally supply-led. Opportunity to develop for market needs, with data-gathering, experimentation, and iteration.

Business model innovation

New models such as (but not limited to) memberships and subscriptions to one or multiple institutions.

Embrace risk

Opportunity for smaller schools in particular to be agile, embrace risk, and innovate quicker than larger competitors.

Coaching

Recent growth and development in coaching capabilities provides tools and mechanisms for continual development.

Technology

Leveraging of new technologies e.g. simulations in AR and VR environments.

Networked communities

Opportunity to develop 'communities of learners'—with lifelong learners networked together, providing valuable data and feedback to providers.

Applied learning

Ability for learners to immediately apply learning to their daily work—where practice in the field has a proven multiplier effect.

Academic-corporate partnerships

Opportunity to support internal corporate learning initiatives and corporate universities e.g. to add cutting-edge research, teaching or credentialling.



THREATS

KEY

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MARKET COMPETITION

Threats posed by traditional/non-traditional competition and external market conditions.

Behind EdTech

Less advanced digital capabilities and market visibility in this space than some competitors e.g. in EdTech.

Faculty losses

Non-traditional competitors may outbid schools for teaching contracts.

Inexperience

University-based executive education has not traditionally offered just-in-time learning, nor highly specific hard skills e.g. cyber-security testing, or product management.

Generational appeal

Doubts as to whether younger generations coming into management roles will turn to university brands for quick upskilling.

Market heat-up

Risk of a sudden and unexpected heating up of the market—e.g. the smart phone boom—leaving providers under-prepared.

Corporate competition

Threat of large organizations filling the gap in the market—bypassing business schools to offer qualifications to learners freshly out of school e.g. a certificate at Google leading to full-time employment.

Aggregation

Partnering with platform companies may dilute individual providers' ability to differentiate and attract new audiences.

Competitor credentialling

Threat that non-traditional competitors develop credentialling power.

Machine learning

Machine learning and AI promises greater personalization and curation of content—and the threat that university-based providers' curation expertise is bypassed.

Self-sustainment

Corporate in-house learning provision is increasingly sophisticated, with access to faculty, technology, and content.

Devaluation

As learning opportunities become more ubiquitous and low cost, threat that the perceived value of university-based executive education decreases.

C-suite buy-in

Successful scaling of lifelong learning in organizations will require senior leadership buy-in and a focus on the question of ROI.

SECONDARY THREATS/FAIL POINTS

Foreseeable knock-on negative effects and potential fail points.

Research slowdown

Slowing effect on research generation with professors disengaged from thought leadership while concentrated on an increased teaching load.

Sloganeering

The threat that lifelong learning could be used as a slogan—with a lack of real change behind it, operating as an aspirational goal only.

Over-extension

Threat that providers over-extend—with too many products, and too broad an audience segment.

Scale vs. social good

Balancing the opportunity of scale and new revenues with the opportunity to achieve a social good.

Workday structure

Lifelong learning requires that people are given time and space to learn, self-direct, and reflect—what does this mean for the traditional workday?

Fragmentation

With a broad range of new opportunities comes the risk that learning becomes fragmented. Compatibility and portability of credentials will be key.

Time and well-being

Implications of increased time/effort demands and additional screen time on already busy learners.

Quality control

Quality control will be key to retaining the premium quality assurances closely associated with top business school brands.

Deep learning USP

The USP of university-based executive education has long centred on deep reflection and 'life-changing moments'—elements not easily scaled.



STRENGTHS

MARKET STRENGTHS

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

LEARNER OUTCOMES



STRENGTHS

MARKET STRENGTHS

Market strengths, selling points, positional strengths, and points of competitive advantage.

TRUST

University-based executive education providers are trusted subject authorities, trusted sources of evidence-based content, and trusted for quality of provision.

“Academic institutions that are doing research, which most companies aren’t spending the time to do, bring a much stronger content orientation than other providers can, and you are a trusted source of that content.”

ASHLEY WILLIAMS, CEO AND CLO, UVA DARDEN EXECUTIVE EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

“One of the great advantages for learners today is that there’s just so much stuff out there. But, as Yuval Harari says, there is a delusion of information. Clarity is power—the ability to say things in a clear way.”

ILIAN MIHOV, DEAN, INSEAD

RESEARCH

Faculty research is the USP and differentiator for university-based business schools versus non-traditional providers—as well as the means by which they can push boundaries.

“At the end of the day content is king. The intellectual capital is the lifeblood that a university or school produces.”

MARK ROBERTS, SENIOR ASSOCIATE DEAN, COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL



“Evidence-based content is an undeniable differentiator that a non university-based competitor in the space can’t easily replicate.”

ASHLEY WILLIAMS, CEO AND CLO, UVA DARDEN EXECUTIVE EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

MARKET CLARITY

Non-traditional providers often offer multiple services (e.g. professional services), whereas university-based executive education possesses the clarity of a single purpose: learning.

“With university-based executive education, the core mission is provision of education and injection of cutting edge thought leadership and research. There’s perhaps less ambiguity than some of the mixed messages of consultants who are obviously also interested ultimately in selling their wider business services.”

ANDREW JACK, GLOBAL EDUCATION EDITOR, FINANCIAL TIMES

OUTDATED STATUS QUO

There is a consensus on all sides that the old model of degree learning with minimal updating afterward is no longer fit for purpose.

“The driving force is the ever-increasing pace of complexification and change in the business world and with the technologies we use. The old view of episodic education where you could have a higher degree, and that half-life of education would last you through your professional career for the next 25-30 years—is completely out of sync with the 21st century economy. I think enough people realize investing in oneself, or companies investing in their human capital capabilities, and constantly updating those is the path forward in an ever-changing world.”

MIKE MALEFAKIS, SENIOR ADVISOR, LEEDS ILLUMINATE



CREDENTIALING POWER

University-based business schools are recognized authorities in quality assessment—with trust, prestige, status, and brand value attached.

“A crucial component in our toolkit is credentialing. As long as we utilize the credential in the right way, the credential that a university provides—whether it is a digital badge, a credit certificate, or a degree—is a quality assessment mechanism that will be valued by the marketplace.”

RAJ ECHAMBADI, PRESIDENT, ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

“9 out of 10 respondents surveyed by AACSB/EMBAC/UNICON see value in certifications and badges, either as complements to or substitutes for degrees, or both.”

AACSB, EMBAC, AND UNICON, ‘UNDERSTANDING THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE DIGITAL GENERATION ON BUSINESS EDUCATION, 2017’

DEMOGRAPHICS

We can see shifting demographics including an aging workforce in many international economies, with many staying engaged in work longer—while Millennial and Gen Y workers arrive primed to learn online.

“People are living longer, people are engaging more later in life, people are going to continue to want to learn and that’s only going to accelerate. Even with older populations, they’re going to want faster, more accessible and more varied sets of learning opportunities.”

MELANIE WEAVER BARNETT, CHIEF EXECUTIVE EDUCATION OFFICER, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

“The Chinese population is aging fast and there are a lot of demographic trends shifting. The population growth has almost ground to a halt. They will probably see some declining population starting this year. So I think there we are gradually seeing the trend or the need for lifelong learning growing at this point. Maybe in the next five or ten years, the demand will shoot up.”

KAN CAI, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, TSINGHUA UNIVERSITY PBCSF



“Older workers (aged 55+) told us that they were the least likely to have received any formal workplace training in the last decade (28%) more than double the national average, despite being the least likely to be planning to move jobs. Employers would do well to consider investing in this group to ensure that all staff are as productive (and happy) as possible.”

'SKILLS INDEX 2021', CITY & GUILDS GROUP

“[There is] massive demand for more affordable and modular education—fuelled by the projection of one billion more digital-native millennial students worldwide over the next 20 years.”

MCKINSEY DIGITAL, 2016, 'ENABLING SEAMLESS LIFELONG LEARNING JOURNEYS—THE NEXT FRONTIER OF DIGITAL EDUCATION'

SKILLS LANDSCAPE

Macro trends: climate change, net zero, social justice, cyber security, remote work, DEI, 4IR technologies like AI, big data and robotics—all herald massive new demand for upskilling and reskilling, and pronounced skills gaps to close.

“50% of all employees will need reskilling by 2025, as adoption of technology increases. [...] By 2025, 85 million jobs may be displaced by a shift in the division of labour between humans and machines. But even more jobs—97 million—may emerge that are more adapted to the new division of labour between humans, machines and algorithms.”

THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM'S 'FUTURE OF JOBS REPORT 2020'

“There is a sizeable gap between the skills that people believe they have, and the skills that are actually in demand by employers.”

'SKILLS INDEX 2021', CITY & GUILDS GROUP

“Business schools are best equipped for developing leaders conversant with breakthrough technologies that are changing the world. These technologies are changing the way companies work across industries. This requires talented people who can lead this brave new hybrid, physical and digital world.”

RAJ ECHAMBADI, PRESIDENT, ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY



“Companies’ strategies and attempts at competitive advantage are increasingly unstable, meaning they need to change increasingly rapidly. As a result, corporate capabilities also need to evolve increasingly rapidly. This makes lifelong learning highly relevant.”

JEAN-FRANÇOIS MANZONI, PRESIDENT, IMD

“Lifelong learning is going to become the fastest growing segment of higher education in the future, given the need of transforming managers by updating their knowledge and skills.”

SANTIAGO IÑIGUEZ DE ONZOÑO, PRESIDENT, IE UNIVERSITY

“Technology is a great example of how business schools and other providers need to think about how to help people get up-to-speed and build confidence in business areas that are providing huge challenges and opportunities for companies today. For example, many managers may not have developed significant tech expertise as they have developed their career to date but today of course technology plays a fundamental role in almost all that we do. It also keeps evolving so quickly that executives find there is a constant need to reboot their tech knowledge and how it applies to their industry or function, they need to keep up with the pace of change.”

MARK ROBERTS, SENIOR ASSOCIATE DEAN, COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL

HIRING COSTS

Hiring for specialist skillsets such as data analysis is expensive. In-house, on-the-job skills development is a cost-effective alternative.

“Low unemployment rates and tight labor markets for skilled workers in many countries have made it difficult to hire ‘ready-made’ workers in a timely manner (it takes an average of 42 days to fill an open job today).”

DELOITTE’S ‘2019 GLOBAL HUMAN CAPITAL TRENDS REPORT’



TALENT TODAY

Investing in people to increase motivation, retention, and employability, has never been more expected, nor in higher demand.

“It’s an expectation for people leaving school and joining organizations, perhaps for the first time, that their growth and development will continue. They want to be preparing themselves for their next job, even while in their current one. Companies should feel obliged to give people good opportunities for growth, to satisfy what people believe is their career potential, as well as their economic potential.”

MICHAEL MOLINARO, CLO, NEW YORK LIFE

“The question about readiness to move into other jobs, job mobility, talent development—that’s one of the big topics we have now. Retention and job satisfaction increase when companies invest in talent and help them grow, whether it’s laterally or upward, or to a different department. Employees are more likely to stay, if they are provided the tools and a personalized approach to develop.”

JIN IVACIC, GLOBAL HEAD OF TALENT ACQUISITION, HYATT HOTELS CORPORATION

“For the individual, and particularly young people, they increasingly value how much the company invests in their training. Companies that don’t offer careers, promotion and training have a disadvantage in competition with others that have clear paths, courses and training schemes and even corporate universities. It’s a very important element of the value proposal that companies offer the people they hire, and also the rankings of the top companies to work for. It’s a must for those companies who want to attract the best possible talent.”

SANTIAGO IÑIGUEZ DE ONZOÑO, PRESIDENT, IE UNIVERSITY

TALENT TOMORROW

Many new trends in talent management align well with lifelong learning: potential-based hiring, learning as a key competency, DEI, and a shift in focus from ‘executives’ to the wider talent pool.



“In this talent market—amplified with our goals around diversity, equity and inclusion—the traditional approach of looking at qualifications or education to assess ability to perform, has been turned over. There is growing attention around ‘potential based’ hiring, versus ‘check the box’ hiring, and this ties into the topic around lifelong learning. It’s finding talent that has the ability to learn on the fly, access what they need, as they need it—as opposed to requiring they come in the door with a laundry list of skills and abilities.”

JIN IVACIC, GLOBAL HEAD OF TALENT ACQUISITION, HYATT HOTELS CORPORATION

REMOTE TIPPING POINT

There are new foundations of online learning capabilities in organizations, plus positive attitudinal shifts towards flexible working patterns.

“There is a move away from the classic, week off-site, on-campus type exec-ed, for the very senior people. The move is towards greater democratization, recognizing these needs for reskilling and adaptation, and the shift to online provision that permits greater access by a larger number of employees to resources and training. There is perhaps too increasing recognition of the need to go deeper in the organization and to offer more ongoing training. Partly because of ever greater disruption and uncertainty, but also, for example, as a tool for motivation and retention of staff, including at more junior levels. Those forces are helping to embed the idea of earlier and continuing support—and later in a career—which points in the direction of lifelong learning for a greater share of the workforce than in the past.”

ANDREW JACK, GLOBAL EDUCATION EDITOR, FINANCIAL TIMES

“The shift in positive attitudes toward remote work is evident: 83% of employers now say the shift to remote work has been successful for their company.”

PWC’S ‘US REMOTE WORK SURVEY 2021’



COMBATS CRITIQUE: 'TOO THEORETICAL'

Lifelong learning combats a critique of universities as 'too theoretical'—with more vocational, hard skill credentials available.

“Asked why they don’t use business schools 20% believe they are too theoretical and not sufficiently abreast of the real-world business challenges we face.”

'THE FUTURE OF LIFELONG AND EXECUTIVE EDUCATION', CARRINGTON CRISP AND LINKEDIN, JULY 2021

COMBATS CRITIQUE: 'ELITIST'

Combats a critique of universities as restrictive of access to knowledge.

“The universities have morphed from the greatest upward lubricant in history to the enforcer of an emerging caste system in America. [...] The children of rich people are 77 times more likely to get into an elite university. A third of elite universities have more kids in the top one percent than the bottom 60 percent.”

SCOTT GALLOWAY, PROFESSOR OF MARKETING AT THE NEW YORK UNIVERSITY STERN SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, FROM AN INTERVIEW FOR INTELLIGENCER, NY MAGAZINE

FLEXIBILITY

On-demand is no longer a trend, but a thriving economy in its own right—with flexibility for end-users the driving force.

“I think that’s a big challenge for people—the investment in taking a year or more to go to school, full or part-time. It’s good, that companies are looking at how to meet their colleagues where they are and create a flexible, on-demand model—without having to make a massive



investment. They can see what works to build a bigger bench of internal talent.”

JIN IVACIC, GLOBAL HEAD OF TALENT ACQUISITION, HYATT HOTELS CORPORATION

“However learning is provided, 71% agree that it needs to be delivered flexibly if they are to engage in lifelong learning.”

‘THE FUTURE OF LIFELONG AND EXECUTIVE EDUCATION’, CARRINGTON CRISP AND LINKEDIN, JULY 2021

“30% of learners are very interested in the idea of a Netflix-style learning platform allowing an individual to choose from a variety of providers to build their own degree.”

‘THE FUTURE OF LIFELONG AND EXECUTIVE EDUCATION’, CARRINGTON CRISP AND LINKEDIN, JULY 2021

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Existing strategic alignment of university-based business schools—in people, skills, and operations—with lifelong learning.

CURATION POWER

There exists already the power, trust and authority to filter, curate, and verify an overabundance of available content.

“The issue with TED Talks is some of them are just wrong, from an academic point of view. All of them are amazing speakers, they can be mesmerizing. I’m an economist and I’ve read some very popular economic commentators, and they’re saying things that are just factually wrong. This is why the academic institutions have a special advantage. That is what we have been doing for centuries. To say, look, there are a billion books out there, but these are the three books you have to read in order to learn this.”

ILIAN MIHOV, DEAN, INSEAD



INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

Expertise to structure content in coherent pathways and frameworks, correctly sequenced by instructional designers.

“The other aspect of curation is defining the sequence in which you learn something. First read this, then discuss that, then listen to this, then experience that. I really think that in the long-run it will still be academic institutions that will own this space.”

ILIAN MIHOV, DEAN, INSEAD

DEEP LEARNING SKILLS

University-based business schools offer expert advice not just on what to read, but how to read—learning (and unlearning and relearning) as a skillset.

“The books are always there. The TED talks are always there—but who will advise you how to read and what to read? I would say academic institutions are most likely the ones that can create this platform better than anybody else.”

ILIAN MIHOV, DEAN, INSEAD

PURPOSE AND VALUES

University-based business schools have an ironclad belief in the importance of learning and the positive impact education can have on society.

“Businesses have a huge impact on the world. What’s primarily responsible for that impact? The people and the decisions they make. Organizations make a significant positive difference in the world, and that people are primarily responsible for that positive impact—our work is built around that. That’s why, in addition to saying to an individual who’s done something with us in the past, we want to provide you with opportunities for lifelong learning, we’re also saying we



will help you enable others to continue their learning—and in a much easier way.”

MELANIE WEAVER BARNETT, CHIEF EXECUTIVE EDUCATION OFFICER,
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

CONVENING POWER

There is an enduring need for in-person provision (including blended and hybrid)—the time and space for reflection and interaction.

“What a university does is to educate talent, what a third-party entity does is to train people. That’s the difference. We need to play on the education side as it provides enduring value for students. This is not to dismiss training, but if you can integrate the training components into the educational modules, then you become a value creator in the marketplace. That is absolutely the future for us.”

RAJ ECHAMBADI, PRESIDENT, ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

“MOOCS compete with books, they don’t compete with education. If you talk about leadership skills, people management, psychological issues, strategy—you need to do this in a different environment, it can’t be purely online. I think this convening power is a big advantage, and it will not disappear.”

ILIAN MIHOV, DEAN, INSEAD

“68% believe that a blended model combining face-to-face and online learning is an ideal skills development path.”

‘THE FUTURE OF LIFELONG AND EXECUTIVE EDUCATION’, CARRINGTON CRISP
AND LINKEDIN, JULY 2021

FACULTY

Faculty offer a straight sight line from research to classroom—with those who create knowledge, teaching it directly.



“It’s the faculty that still produce content that pushes the boundaries and anticipates the future; faculty are reflecting on deep learnings around what has been going on and what will go on, they have expertise that practitioners simply do not have. I find it hard to think that business schools will one day get squeezed out by technology players and platforms. Business schools may well partner with technology firms that have the platforms and the technology to distribute content to broad or narrow populations. Ecosystems are definitely going to evolve and partnerships that may or may not be surprising will appear.”

MARK ROBERTS, SENIOR ASSOCIATE DEAN, COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL

“In the business school classroom you have somebody who can tell you: this is the frontier of knowledge, this is what we know, this is the evidence—and explain it in a way that is practical and understandable. This is a comparative advantage—having these people who create knowledge, who innovate, and who are willing to teach directly to an audience.”

ILIAN MIHOV, DEAN, INSEAD

APPLIED LEARNING

There is a long-term trend in action-oriented learning in executive education—aligns well with applied learning opportunities.

“Business schools have had an increasing emphasis on practical business application, with a focus on skills and techniques that are useful and applicable tomorrow.”

ASHLEY WILLIAMS, CEO AND CLO, UVA DARDEN EXECUTIVE EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

“What we do as faculty is fundamentally engage—connecting the rigour of the content with the relevance of the real world. This is a core capability that universities bring to the table.”

RAJ ECHAMBADI, PRESIDENT, ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY



LONGEVITY

University-based business schools have a history and experience in creating compelling learning experiences for demanding audiences, with a wide variety of pedagogies, ensuring impact and proving ROI.

“It’s a continual challenge to create meaningful learning experiences that catalyze real change. I think business schools and especially the executive education portions of business schools, are getting really good at that.”

MELANIE WEAVER BARNETT, CHIEF EXECUTIVE EDUCATION OFFICER,
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

FUTURE OF WORK

Universities play a central role in developing 4IR technologies—with business schools positioned well to teach associated skills.

“The most significant workforce and talent issue for C-suite executives that our respondents identified this year was ‘transitioning to the future of work’ (28 percent).”

DELOITTE’S ‘2019 GLOBAL HUMAN CAPITAL TRENDS REPORT’

VARIETY

Universities sit across vast varieties of content, knowledge, and expertise—aligning well with the varied skills and knowledge demands of lifelong learning.

“At the highest-level universities are best positioned to be a primary provider of lifelong learning opportunities, because of the variation in types of learning people want to have—whereas an institution that’s solely a business school is limited in what they can offer. There’s almost nothing you want to learn about that the University of Michigan wouldn’t be able to help you out with.”

MELANIE WEAVER BARNETT, CHIEF EXECUTIVE EDUCATION OFFICER,
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS



“While the focus is likely to continue to be on upgrading the needed skills and competencies to address the twenty-first century employability needs, let’s not forget the value of balancing it with a broader liberal arts perspective and the enhancement of personal and organizational wellness.”

JERRY WIND, PROFESSOR OF MARKETING AT THE WHARTON SCHOOL, IN ‘EXECUTIVE EDUCATION AFTER THE PANDEMIC’, EDITED BY SANTIAGO IÑIGUEZ DE ONZOÑO AND PETER LORANGE.

INNOVATION

Executive education has a history of innovation within the university-based business school structure—e.g. in program design, experiential learning, partnerships.

“Shifting from supply driven, faculty driven choices for what we offer and finding more innovative ways of working with outside companies, and combining forces to do something more future looking. There are some schools that are doing this already. They work not exclusively with tenured faculty, but they say, we will adapt to the challenge that company X has given us and we will get the best people to meet that challenge—and that’s not necessarily our internal faculty.”

MIKE MALEFAKIS, SENIOR ADVISOR, LEEDS ILLUMINATE

SHORTER PROGRAMS

There is already an existing trend in executive education towards shorter, more focused programs—as well as a rise in certificates, badges and diplomas being offered.

“The percentage of AACSB business schools offering non-degree certificates or diploma programs over the last three years has grown to nearly 50%, a 20% difference over three years.”

‘MICROCREDENTIALS: CONNECTING BUSINESS SCHOOLS AND BUSINESS THROUGH LIFELONG LEARNING’ AN AACSB BRIEFING PAPER AUGUST 2021



“Everything is more pragmatic plus there is a sense that you have to learn what you need to know much more quickly. Today, we find that companies have a shorter time horizon than in the past when they consider their learning investments. Companies aren’t investing so much in longer term, more luxurious learning, nor are individuals. They are thinking, what do we need this person or that group of people to do in the next few months or the next year, to be able to move our business forward more confidently and more effectively in order to create competitive advantage or deliver on a new strategy. This means the programs—and this maps back onto lifelong learning—have got shorter, more focused, more action oriented. Rather than just being intellectually enriching, there’s a conscious focus on application and how execs use this knowledge when they go back to their desk on the following Monday.”

MARK ROBERTS, SENIOR ASSOCIATE DEAN, COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL

ALUMNI NETWORKS

University-based business schools have an existing audience for lifelong learning in their alumni networks.

“Business schools and education providers more generally are looking at lifelong learning strategically as a source of revenue, but also as a mechanism to develop and deepen the alumni relationship with wider benefits.”

ANDREW JACK, GLOBAL EDUCATION EDITOR, FINANCIAL TIMES

LEARNER OUTCOMES

Positive outcomes for employees, employers, wider business, and wider society.

LOWER COSTS

Scaled new revenue models can bring lower price points for learners.



“With digital learning experiences, you can have much farther reach—to people who might not have access because of their location or available funds. If you can offer learning via technology and at a lower cost, you’re increasing access and inclusion.”

MELANIE WEAVER BARNETT, CHIEF EXECUTIVE EDUCATION OFFICER,
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

KNOWLEDGE ACCELERATION

The accelerated transfer of business school thinking to the frontline of work where it can be usefully applied.

TIME EFFICIENCIES

Lifelong learning models promise less time away from the office and family for learners—an efficiency that directly addresses the skills transfer gap.

“Learners can effectively take on a new skill and then get busy applying it from the comfort of their home office, all with virtually no turnaround time.”

ROBERT DAVID, SILICON VALLEY EXECUTIVE EDUCATION

RECORD OF LEARNING

Learning pathways of stackable/portable credentials offer a detailed record of learning for employers.

“The credentials they [learners] earn follow them throughout their professional lives, reflecting the total sum of their education, from traditional degrees earned to alternative badges and corporate training completed.”

TIFFANY DOVEY FISHMAN AND LINSEY SLEDGE, ‘REIMAGINING HIGHER EDUCATION: HOW COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES, BUSINESS, AND GOVERNMENTS CAN PREPARE FOR A NEW AGE OF LIFELONG LEARNING’, DELOITTE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2014



SKILLS SIGNALLING

For employees, a record of learning allows easy signalling of marketable skillsets and enhances employability.

“In the past, people thought if I’m hired here and I do this job, I can retire in this job. We have a turnover rate of 0.75% in Volkswagen. So, you see that people connect with that whole-life way of work. Yet now that’s pretty much not the case for the majority. Now people look not from let’s employ a relationship but from a skills perspective.”

DR. MARTIN HOFMANN, HEAD OF HR DIGITALIZATION, VW GROUP

LESS OVERLAP

Recording of granular skills acquisition helps avoid duplication of learning across one’s lifetime.

LASER SKILLS TARGETING

Potential to deliver focused learning for specific short-term needs e.g. ‘Social Media Marketing Tactics’ vs. ‘Digital Marketing.’



WEAKNESSES

INTERNAL-STRUCTURAL

EXTERNAL-MARKET

OPERATIONAL/DEPLOYMENT

FINANCIAL



WEAKNESSES

INTERNAL-STRUCTURAL

Existing internal/structural weaknesses for university-based business schools—as challenges/barriers to lifelong learning.

TEACHING CAPACITY

There is a limit to faculty capacity to deliver and teach more, whilst maintaining their current research levels.

LACK OF AGILITY

A desire to innovate in academia can contrast with a slowness in adapting to and adopting new ideas.

RESISTANCE

Transformative change is difficult for any organization, with university-based providers no exception.

“There is a tension that exists between the desires of the institution to innovate, and the longstanding requirements placed on the faculty, which means there’s an inherent slowness and resistance to change created through the university-based business and operating model.”

ASHLEY WILLIAMS, CEO AND CLO, UVA DARDEN EXECUTIVE EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING



SCALE OF CHANGE

Large-scale change needed—with adaptation required to content, modalities, and revenue models.

“We have to not only move the modalities, we have to move the content as well—more nimbly.”

ASHLEY WILLIAMS, CEO AND CLO, UVA DARDEN EXECUTIVE EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

FACULTY TRAINING

Skills within academia need updating around: new mindsets, new technologies, new audiences, new formats.

“The accelerating pace of change necessitates new ecosystems and requires faculty training. It’s a completely different mindset for faculty moving from a ‘sage on the stage’ model to becoming the ‘orchestrator’ of the ecosystem.”

RAJ ECHAMBADI, PRESIDENT, ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

“The faculty has to be able to orchestrate the learning process. That has to do with managing hybrid formats, managing platforms with ease and comfort, and in addition to be entertaining. The challenge is how to make our faculty become much more comfortable and natural with these media, to see all the potentials of technology applied into the learning process. Our experience is the vast majority of faculty who use this technology enjoy it. The major challenge is how to keep them updated in a way that enhances the importance and prominence of the professor as the orchestrator of the whole learning process.”

SANTIAGO IÑIGUEZ DE ONZOÑO, PRESIDENT, IE UNIVERSITY

STRUCTURAL IMPEDIMENTS

Existing degree-focused governance structures can inhibit the freedom to innovate.



“To address the more structural factors—governance within schools has to change.”

RAJ ECHAMBADI, PRESIDENT, ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

“The bulk of what universities do is degreed learning. The non-degree, lifelong learning, or the revenue generating activity—however big it might be, is not as big as all the university degrees we grant. Therefore all of our structures will be focused on that. In the case of Berkeley and Duke, to address that structural challenge, they actually spun off the non-degree into a semi private company that’s exclusively owned by the university, and it has more levels of freedom.”

MIKE MALEFAKIS, SENIOR ADVISOR, LEEDS ILLUMINATE

PRACTITIONERS

New practical topics may require more practitioner faculty members and researchers.

“We might need, as business schools and universities, more practitioner focused research. We might need more practitioner type faculty members too, because right now most of the top tier universities are built around deep and narrow agendas. Like all of these things, meeting that need would take money, there has to be a business model.”

MELANIE WEAVER BARNETT, CHIEF EXECUTIVE EDUCATION OFFICER,
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

RESEARCH AGENDA

Wider and deeper skills offerings require broader research agendas.

“More practitioner research, digital oriented research—I think this is going to be necessary if the business schools are going to be competitive in the marketplace of the future.”

MELANIE WEAVER BARNETT, CHIEF EXECUTIVE EDUCATION OFFICER,
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS



EXTERNAL-MARKET

Existing weaknesses in the market/market strategy for university-based business schools—as challenges/barriers to lifelong learning.

LANGUAGE GAP

Definitions of ‘lifelong learning’ vary widely, with marked differences in meaning—notably between the supply and demand sides.

“Definitions around lifelong learning can vary greatly.”

KAN CAI, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, TSINGHUA UNIVERSITY PBCSF

NAME RECOGNITION

Demand for ‘lifelong learning’ by name is not yet high—while demand for the drivers behind lifelong learning are high: skills updates, flexibility etc.

“At this point, organizations have not come to us to say: we want to organize a series of courses around the framework of lifelong learning. Instead they come with requirements for certain knowledge or skills. Right now, it’s going quite slowly, because the demand is not very strong. We have to make sure we deliver what the clients are looking for first.”

KAN CAI, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, TSINGHUA UNIVERSITY PBCSF

EVIDENCE

Despite the term ‘lifelong learning’ being coined long ago, there is a lack of existing models to point to in practice showing continuous skills acquisition across evolving careers.

“There’s certainly a growing recognition of the need for more continuous skills acquisition and evolution of expertise over time, than



in the past. I don't yet think one can point to extremely well-oiled and effective models of it in practice."

ANDREW JACK, GLOBAL EDUCATION EDITOR, FINANCIAL TIMES

FUTURE SKILLS

Uncertainty persists around the skills needed 5-10 years from now, with the best available analysis still unclear.

"When we look at content driven by demand side analysis of the upcoming skills needed over the next few years—there is still a debate and even the best analysis is not sure on what those skillsets will be."

MIKE MALEFAKIS, SENIOR ADVISOR, LEEDS ILLUMINATE

ONLINE FATIGUE

There is a widely reported fatigue with self-directed learning, time online, and screen time.

"Online learning is definitely a convenient and accessible format. However, one of the best parts of learning is the peer-to-peer connections and that simply can't be replicated with the same impact in an online environment as with in-person learning. The pandemic has left our learners longing for in-person formatting, they were obligated to have most of their interactions on screens. Overall, the interest in self-directed learning has also waned, with some finding it isolating and less rewarding—again attributable to the pandemic. Nevertheless, self-directed learning is still quite popular among learners seeking just-in-time skills, and those with a deep curiosity. As the world settles into post-pandemic living, there will be increased demand for both online and self-directed learning—the convenience is unbeatable."

RHONDA GEORGE-DENNISTON CHIEF LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, TBWA\WORLDWIDE



PERCEPTION

There is a view of university-based executive education as sometimes 'heavy' (i.e. intricate, time-consuming, expensive)—at odds with lifelong learning's appeal.

“There is a view that university-based executive education has a certain approach which sometimes feels a bit heavy. Sometimes the bigger companies quite like a more bespoke approach, and perhaps working with one or two trusted individuals they use very frequently, and they can rely on because of the individual qualities of those people. Whereas, if you go for the brand overall of the provider, you might get some inconsistency in quality, or a slightly more cookie cutter approach.”

ANDREW JACK, GLOBAL EDUCATION EDITOR, FINANCIAL TIMES

“52% consider business schools too expensive for their learning needs.”

‘THE FUTURE OF LIFELONG AND EXECUTIVE EDUCATION’, CARRINGTON CRISP AND LINKEDIN, JULY 2021

TECHNOLOGY BARRIERS

Technology can be a barrier for some older learners. Quality of user experience in general a key concern.

“Making the technology easier for older people to get used to is another challenge. I think that’s something for us as the potential providers of lifelong learning to think about in the realm of user experience.”

MELANIE WEAVER BARNETT, CHIEF EXECUTIVE EDUCATION OFFICER, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

“By 2030 it is predicted that 4.5m people (8% of the [UK] population) will remain digitally disengaged.”

ANNUAL UK CONSUMER DIGITAL INDEX FROM LLOYDS BANK



OPERATIONAL/DEPLOYMENT

Operational weaknesses for university-based business schools—as challenges/barriers to successful deployment of a lifelong learning strategy.

SELF-DIRECTED

The onus on learners to motivate themselves can bias those already highly engaged.

“If you launch a learning experience platform, you can see people who are already motivated, who are already on the cutting edge of the transformation. They have very high engagement in adding new competencies, new knowledge to their profile. While the critical mass of people in the workforce you really need for the transformation, as opposed to those who already have the attitude and the motivation to drive change, they are not working on their profile.”

DR. MARTIN HOFMANN, HEAD OF HR DIGITALIZATION, HR SERVICES & RECRUITING VOLKSWAGEN GROUP

“I think [self-paced learning libraries] are a complement to more conscious programming of learning for companies. I remember an airline we were talking to who thought a content library would be the solution for everything. It was what you’d expect: the motivated consume as much as you can give them, the unmotivated don’t. It doesn’t necessarily do the job of getting people primed with what you need them to know when you need them to know it. But it’s a nice thing to be able to offer people so that they feel good about the company and the learning opportunities that they have. You can’t control what they consume very easily, and lots of people start things and don’t finish them.”

MARK ROBERTS, SENIOR ASSOCIATE DEAN, COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL

“How am I going to help this company adapt to that world? That’s your responsibility, and that is in your hands. I can encourage you to do that. But that’s up to you to decide whether you want to put the time in and enrich yourself for the benefit of the company.”

JOHNNA TORSONE, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER, PITNEY BOWES



“The challenge of self-paced is—how does it tie to the broader picture of what’s needed, the timing of when it becomes a skill, and how is it viewed within the organization? I don’t think many companies have fully connected these pieces yet.”

JIN IVACIC, GLOBAL HEAD OF TALENT ACQUISITION, HYATT HOTELS CORPORATION

SOFTER SKILLS

Online learning is currently better suited to technical and hard skills than to soft and social skills. Lifelong learning cannot focus solely on hard skills.

“Digital learning is currently better built to serve the technical skill than the social aspects of learning. There’s a reconciling that needs to happen there—for a true lifelong learning experience to be taken seriously over the long haul.”

TOM HUNSAKER, ASSOCIATE DEAN OF INNOVATION, THUNDERBIRD SCHOOL OF GLOBAL MANAGEMENT

“You might say, lifelong learning is essentially about knowledge and skills, but actually it’s about mindset as well and behaviors—how do we show up together. It’s a constant learning challenge.”

JAMES FULTON, CLO AND GLOBAL HEAD OF TALENT DEVELOPMENT, GOLDMAN SACHS

“In a Wall Street Journal survey of nearly 900 executives last year, 92% said soft skills were equally important or more important than technical skills. But 89% said they have a very or somewhat difficult time finding people with the requisite attributes.”

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, ‘EMPLOYERS FIND “SOFT SKILLS” LIKE CRITICAL THINKING IN SHORT SUPPLY’

FRAGMENTED DELIVERY

Flexibility is convenient for the learner, but challenging for faculty and administrators.



“This new world, which is a lot more fragmented, is a lot more convenient for the learner. The learner not having to come to you for two or three days and being intensively soaked in something. The program gets spread out in small bites, which is better for them in many ways, but it’s difficult for your faculty. It’s demanding in many ways, with more fragmented schedules.”

JEAN-FRANÇOIS MANZONI, PRESIDENT, IMD

CALIBRATION

Increased diversity in learning groups (cross-industry, cross-seniority, mixed experience) makes it hard to calibrate and cater at the individual level.

“We are seeing much more diverse groups—which is great. People are able to switch functions and industries much more than in the past. However, this means that calibrating groups on programs becomes tougher, and also there is a greater need to personalize the learning. The execs on a program may come from a finance background, or from a marketing background, or from a technology background but they may have all found themselves in a similar job today as you can switch functions and roles in a much freer and more creative way than in times gone by. The learning needs of this mix of executives may be similar in some areas but may be very different in terms of those business areas they lack knowledge, expertise and confidence.”

MARK ROBERTS, SENIOR ASSOCIATE DEAN, COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL

PERSONAL VS. ORGANIZATIONAL

An increased demand for personalization brings new challenges around connecting individualized pathways to organizational goals.

“A lifelong learning strategy should start with the interaction between people who are organizing competence sets—the supervisors responsible for business units. To anchor lifelong learning in strategy it is crucial to connect it to a regular process of matching competency skills to perceived visible action. Then there is the question of



orchestrating it from a company perspective, and bringing it together with the basic curiosity and the development needs of employees. If this works out, you have integrated lifelong learning.”

DR. MARTIN HOFMANN, HEAD OF HR DIGITALIZATION, HR SERVICES & RECRUITING VOLKSWAGEN GROUP

“Many learning initiatives are too imprecise. Lifelong learning will only work if you have a very concrete field of practice where you can connect your input of learning with your reality. Otherwise, it is like learning a language, you learn it, but if you do not use it, you forget it, you will not anchor.”

DR. MARTIN HOFMANN, HEAD OF HR DIGITALIZATION, HR SERVICES & RECRUITING VOLKSWAGEN GROUP

PERSONALIZATION VS. SCALE

There is an inherent tension between personalization and scaled learning solutions.

“There’s definitely a trend and a need to personalize learning more. That’s clearly a big theme and a business school challenge in their dialogue with corporates. How do you serve the corporate agenda and the personal agenda in the same program? The expectation, fuelled by technology, is that you can have personalized tracks and programs that allow people to pick and choose.”

MARK ROBERTS, SENIOR ASSOCIATE DEAN, COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL

GENUINE MICRO LEARNING

Some attempts at micro learning amount to slicing long-format programs into smaller pieces, rather than intentional micro learning design.

“A lot of times there is this notion that we create a digital course, let’s chop that course into eight different modules so we can satisfy the lifelong learning market. It’s the wrong model. The model has got to be,



let's go to the market, figure out what they want, and design a product that meets the market demand.”

RAJ ECHAMBADI, PRESIDENT, ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

FINANCIAL

Strategic weaknesses for university-based business schools based on finances—as challenges/barriers to a strategy of lifelong learning.

INVESTMENT

Many of the associated challenges here require significant investment to address—and/or new business models.

SPENDING POWER

University-based providers command smaller budgets than some competitors in the field e.g. marketing spend.

“It’s not so much the agility, it’s the financial muscle. Some EdTech companies raised \$200-\$300 million to deliver programs online. We spend, but definitely not so much on marketing, and that’s why many of them are successful.”

ILIAN MIHOV, DEAN, INSEAD

RESEARCH EXPENSE

Research creation is an on-going expense for business schools, which their competitors do not have.

“We need to create knowledge, we need to create research, we need all this research—but research is expensive. We pay professors high



salaries, and they teach very little, because we expect them to write books, to write articles and so on.”

ILIAN MIHOV, DEAN, INSEAD

COST VS. SCALE

How does university-based executive education scale what is traditionally a premium product to mid- and junior- level management levels, without a drop-off in quality?

“It’s easier for providers such as business schools to be focused on packages that are very clearly defined. They have a certain critical mass and common themes and can therefore be scaled and offered to groups. There is a tension between: how can you create something you can commoditize and replicate efficiently, versus learning that does need to be tailored and adaptable in format and structure for both individuals, teams, and wider organizations—and making those different offerings available at different points in individual’s careers.”

ANDREW JACK, GLOBAL EDUCATION EDITOR, FINANCIAL TIMES

“It’s partly that the offerings from big business schools are just too expensive for a regular budget. It’s just not feasible to do this for the broad part of the pyramid. We do a huge program for the middle management—it’s pretty much customized. I have done this for the top management with business schools, but honestly speaking I do not think by doing this for the full leadership capacities you’d be really addressing people’s needs.”

DR. MARTIN HOFMANN, HEAD OF HR DIGITALIZATION, HR SERVICES & RECRUITING VOLKSWAGEN GROUP



OPPORTUNITIES

MARKET CONDITIONS

IMPACT

GROWTH

INNOVATION



OPPORTUNITIES

MARKET CONDITIONS

Opportunities presented by micro and macro market trends, and by a potential adoption of lifelong learning as a strategy for university-based business schools.

JUST IN TIME

The demand for skills and knowledge today has a time horizon of months rather than years.

“Investing in lifelong learning platforms, where people can log in and figure out what is the next step in their career, and how this next step translates into learning needs, and finding the right learning to meet those needs on the platform—whether it is online or in person, or a sequence of curated, guided content.”

ILIAN MIHOV, DEAN, INSEAD

JOB MOBILITY

Faster turnover rates, ‘the great resignation,’ and a rise in non-linear career trajectories are greatly increasing demand for upskilling and reskilling.

“I don’t think that companies lose by enhancing the employability of their talent now. Investing in training and lifelong education always improves your assets, your human resource. The risk is they may leave at some stage—but it’s better to have better talent even at the risk of losing out to other companies.”

SANTIAGO IÑIGUEZ DE ONZOÑO, PRESIDENT, IE UNIVERSITY

“People are changing functions, industries, or careers, much more frequently. They need to reboot, but they’re rebooting for the coming



weeks and months and for the next couple of years. They need new skills they can apply quickly, effectively and in real time.”

MARK ROBERTS, SENIOR ASSOCIATE DEAN, COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL

“Those exiting secondary education today may expect to experience five or more distinct careers, in fields yet to be imagined, over a 60+ year working lifetime.”

COREY SNOW, DIRECTOR, EDUCATION CLOUD INDUSTRY SOLUTIONS, INTEGRATIONS & ARCHITECTURE AT SALESFORCE, ‘MICROCREDENTIALS: CONNECTING BUSINESS SCHOOLS AND BUSINESS THROUGH LIFELONG LEARNING’, AN AACSB BRIEFING PAPER AUGUST 2021

“One in three adults say they want to change job, but most think they lack the skills to switch. Over a third of adults (34%) are looking to change job or career in the next two years [while] over two thirds (69%) of the people looking to switch say they will need to develop their skills to do so.”

LEARNING AND WORK INSTITUTE’S (L&W) ‘ADULT PARTICIPATION IN LEARNING SURVEY 2021’

PACE OF CHANGE

Complexification, rapid change, disruption and instability all greatly increase the need for continually updating skillsets and support for people.

“Before, you would have had maybe three to five years for a large-scale intervention on something like sustainability—now, you’ve got 18 months. Organizations need employees to develop new skills and new attitudes faster and faster.”

JEAN-FRANÇOIS MANZONI, PRESIDENT, IMD

“More than two-thirds (67%) of digital leaders globally are unable to keep pace with change because of a dearth of technology talent.”

THE HARVEY NASH CIO SURVEY



POPULAR TREND

The view that professionals should/must keep learning and updating their skills through a career and lifetime, is now widely held and popular.

“The vast majority of business leaders (94%) now expect employees to pick up new skills on the job—a sharp rise from 65% in 2018.”

THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM’S ‘FUTURE OF JOBS REPORT 2020’

“It’s a huge opportunity. As business schools we are fortunate that the world realizes this more and more—that you have to learn throughout your lifetime. Now this market is just exploding.”

ILIAN MIHOV, DEAN, INSEAD

SCALE OF DEMAND

The OECD estimates that 1.1 billion jobs are liable to be radically transformed by technology in the next decade.

“Talent shortages at 15-year-high as hard and soft skills are more difficult to find than ever before [...] with 69% of employers reporting difficulty filling vacancies.”

MANPOWERGROUP EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK SURVEY Q3 2021

“If you come down below the top ten business schools—Harvard and other elite schools can only take care of a small segment of the marketplace. Think of the overall market as a bell curve, and if you develop offerings aligned with, and for, the right kind of market, there are going to be incredible opportunities for schools to be successful.”

RAJ ECHAMBADI, PRESIDENT, ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

“Suddenly, a manager who perhaps did an MBA in their early 30s and has had robust business experience business, is finding that today, at 45-55, they have to deal with and make decisions on topics on which they have had neither much hands-on experience nor any academic grooming. Carbon zero strategy and climate, the future of work and working remotely, artificial intelligence, big data and digital transformation, diversity and inclusion—these are some of the



massive themes businesses have to embrace and integrate quickly and effectively into their strategies. The changing context means there is no doubt in my mind that there's going to be a lot of need for lifelong learning and executive education not just on the fundamentals of business but especially on those areas that are shaping the future of business.”

MARK ROBERTS, SENIOR ASSOCIATE DEAN, COLUMBIA BUSINESS SCHOOL

IMPACT

Opportunities to create greater impact, as presented by the potential adoption of lifelong learning as a strategy for university-based business schools.

ACCESSIBILITY

Scope to enable many more people to reach their potential—with remote learning and lower costs promising ‘democratization’ of learning.

“Universities should be stepping into this space and increasing access to knowledge and teaching that advances human development and extends beyond what you can get in a ‘one and done’ MBA residential program. At the heart of it, it’s a very simple thing—its democratization. Universities should pride themselves on increasing access to that quality of instruction and knowledge.”

ASHLEY WILLIAMS, CEO AND CLO, UVA DARDEN EXECUTIVE EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

“How do we leverage technology to make things more accessible—to give our employees a better experience and scale things more effectively, but conversely too, to adapt to unique and local needs more effectively?”

JULIE DERVIN, GLOBAL HEAD OF CORPORATE LEARNING & ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, CARGILL



INCLUSION

Greater inclusion for under-represented populations—from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, to introverted personality types, to gender, race, and age groups—broadening the definition of who belongs at university-based business schools.

“If you’re going to reach people over their lifetime and be relevant, you’re going to reach so many people who don’t currently have the ‘golden ticket’ into what is still too often a very elite game, certainly in higher education.”

TOM HUNSAKER, ASSOCIATE DEAN OF INNOVATION, THUNDERBIRD SCHOOL OF GLOBAL MANAGEMENT

IN-CAREER SUPPORT

Opportunity to map learning onto career trajectories—with skills/advice/training delivered at the point of need, and at specific career steps.

“Really the desire is to build relationships that precede an undergraduate education and extend throughout one’s professional life. What would it look like to have a true lifelong relationship, as an alumni member of your particular institution, or as a pass to a number of institutions?”

TOM HUNSAKER, ASSOCIATE DEAN OF INNOVATION, THUNDERBIRD SCHOOL OF GLOBAL MANAGEMENT

“Executives over a 40-year career experience many times where they face an environment for which they’re not ready, and they’re going to need various injections of insights. Insights plus the time and space to process them. Clearly, executive education programs are one way to give them both the space and the insight.”

JEAN-FRANÇOIS MANZONI, PRESIDENT, IMD



PORTABILITY

Lifelong learning promises transferable credentials, recognized widely across industries, geographies, and between providers.

“Mid-journey, someone can go somewhere else [to another provider]. But it is a continuous journey. I think that we can offer a lot, but we cannot offer everything, and we should not try to.”

ILIAN MIHOV, DEAN, INSEAD

STACKABILITY

Lifelong learning can provide a framework for accumulating knowledge, with micro credentials acquired and presented in a portfolio of skills.

“Stackable degrees are growing in popularity primarily because of their flexibility—they allow students to earn multiple credentials that can be applied toward full degrees over time.”

AACSB ARTICLE, ‘MEETING MARKET DEMAND FOR STACKABLE CREDENTIALS’

PATHWAYS

Opportunity to tackle the disjointedness of education and training, bringing them together in coherent pathways for learners and employers alike.

“There’s some real appetite and ambition to make education less disjointed. What if attaining an alumni status accrues a lifetime of potential benefits, or a lifetime of potential access, on a membership or subscription basis?”

TOM HUNSAKER, ASSOCIATE DEAN OF INNOVATION, THUNDERBIRD SCHOOL OF GLOBAL MANAGEMENT

“To me lifelong learning is the possibility, throughout your professional life, to have access to knowledge and education, in different forms, not just courses—but delivered in a more systematic way.”

ILIAN MIHOV, DEAN, INSEAD



LEARNING AS CORE

Lifelong learning provides an opportunity to promote learning agility as a core competency—with critical skills of learning made central to the curriculum.

“To me the ultimate skill we should be teaching from elementary education on and periodically revisiting is learning agility—the ability to learn quicker and relearn. As Alvin Toffler wrote, “The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn.” This is the core competency that will keep individuals relevant and will keep companies relevant and able to reinvent themselves. The best way to reinvent yourself is through upgrading educationally. Part of lifelong learning will be revising our curriculum to understand that we need to teach the ability to relearn and unlearn as core.”

MIKE MALEFAKIS, SENIOR ADVISOR, LEEDS ILLUMINATE

“You have to develop people, their mindsets to be agile enough to be able to be ready, and also curious enough to want to be learning and developing. Now that’s lifelong learning as a skill.”

JEAN-FRANÇOIS MANZONI, PRESIDENT, IMD

ROI

Opportunity to address a long-standing challenge for executive education—the proving of ROI—with lower costs, practical learning outcomes, and quicker results.

“I think with formal education it comes down to duration and the time it takes to actually complete a degree versus value. Condensed ways to deliver valuable learnings to someone that they can begin applying right away, would more quickly demonstrate the return on investment.”

JIN IVACIC, GLOBAL HEAD OF TALENT ACQUISITION, HYATT HOTELS CORPORATION

“Advertising sits at the intersection of creativity and innovation, being able to tap into the expertise of business schools to create an adaptable curriculum is an attractive proposition. Such a venture would address ongoing talent upskilling needs. The costs, however, can be a barrier



and with turnover at an all-time high, it's difficult to demonstrate the ROI. A more affordable partnership would promote a sustainable relationship and allow agencies to upskill en masse."

RHONDA GEORGE-DENNISTON CHIEF LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT
OFFICER, TBWA\WORLDWIDE

"Just over four out of ten (44%) say colleagues have not realised benefits after investing in a business school programme."

'THE FUTURE OF LIFELONG AND EXECUTIVE EDUCATION', CARRINGTON CRISP
AND LINKEDIN, JULY 2021

GROWTH

Opportunities for growth—audience growth, revenue growth, and market growth—presented by the potential adoption of lifelong learning as a strategy for university-based business schools.

NEW MARKET LAYERS

Opportunity to reach under-catered mid- and junior-level management layers, and support and advance careers.

"Development for high-potentials is a very common model. You cut your way through years and years of junior and middle management, and then you reach the holy grail of development. I always want to say: just give this to me 10 years earlier! We've introduced a new approach to goal setting for managers as coaches throughout the firm, as well as for the provision of high quality feedback to our partners, roughly the top 400 in the firm. These are interventions to drive and support learning in a learning culture."

JAMES FULTON, CLO AND GLOBAL HEAD OF TALENT DEVELOPMENT,
GOLDMAN SACHS

"That mid-career point where employees are wondering—how do they start getting that experience and exposure, and feel they're getting that



breadth of experience and learnings they can start applying, even if they're not at that level yet. I think that's a gap for a lot of organizations."

JIN IVACIC, GLOBAL HEAD OF TALENT ACQUISITION, HYATT HOTELS CORPORATION

"You want middle managers to be able to understand business fundamentals, regardless of their degree. People that either don't have degrees, or those that have degrees in something outside of business are relatively handicapped in their ability to advance and become stronger leaders and managers without access to lifelong learning."

ASHLEY WILLIAMS, CEO AND CLO, UVA DARDEN EXECUTIVE EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

"In a survey of middle managers, training and development ranked as the second most important factor for employees at work, behind only work/life balance and ahead of managers who cares about their staff."

MANAGING DIRECTOR, HAYS AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

CASCADING

Cascading means large-scale deployment of learning, with thousands rather than hundreds of employees engaged—with implications for culture change and other transformation projects.

"There's a group beyond the high-potentials that's hugely important to the success of the company, and there are some people who you haven't yet figured out have high potential. By ignoring them, you're doing a big disservice to your organization. Here's where I think there is a big opportunity—especially as technology assisted learning becomes increasingly sophisticated—that is to cascade the learning throughout the organization, literally to the hundreds of thousands of individual contributors in the company. That is an opportunity for business schools. If you've got a certain culture, you're trying to create certain initiatives that you're trying to make happen in your organization, whether it's around digitization, diversity, equity, or another challenge. With technology assisted learning, you do have the opportunity to really



educate and engage thousands of people where in the old model that just wasn't feasible."

MELANIE WEAVER BARNETT, CHIEF EXECUTIVE EDUCATION OFFICER,
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

"They had stopped all the legacy leadership programs because they're expensive to run. They were low capacity, as far as how many leaders we could engage in the learning in a given year, and they weren't aligned to our strategy. I had to lead the new strategy for leadership development."

JULIE DERVIN, GLOBAL HEAD OF CORPORATE LEARNING & ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, CARGILL

LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIPS

Stronger partnerships between organizations and business schools—with capability-building, deeper understanding of needs based on data, and long-term value creation.

"To deliver capability building from the frontline—to the middle manager, to the senior executive—requires real partnerships between organizations and business schools."

ASHLEY WILLIAMS, CEO AND CLO, UVA DARDEN EXECUTIVE EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

"81% agree that their organisation will seek to create long-term relationships with learning providers to build understanding of their business and maximise impact from learning."

'THE FUTURE OF LIFELONG AND EXECUTIVE EDUCATION', CARRINGTON CRISP AND LINKEDIN, JULY 2021

NEW REVENUES

Lifelong learning can bring diversified revenues through new revenue streams and augmenting existing streams.



“There’s not a lot we can do with our traditional cost structures. From a practical perspective, we need to generate newer types of revenue models, because diversifying revenue streams—in order to bolster your academic enterprise—is going to be crucial for a lot of universities.”

RAJ ECHAMBADI, PRESIDENT, ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

“In the next two years 48% expect budgets to increase for learning and development in their organization.”

‘THE FUTURE OF LIFELONG AND EXECUTIVE EDUCATION’, CARRINGTON CRISP AND LINKEDIN, JULY 2021

MARKET SEGMENTATION

Opportunity to identify and target new market segments.

“To me it is time for universities to rethink our focus only on degree-seeking candidates, and broaden our vision to include learners who are interested in educational learning experiences. It requires us to embrace short term educational offerings, be it a six-week course, or a three-month certificate, perhaps stacking those into bigger for-credit credentials including degrees. In essence, broaden the definition of who belongs at the university.”

RAJ ECHAMBADI, PRESIDENT, ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

“Executive education for a long time has been focused at the top of the pyramid. I think we are increasingly very clear we have to make our offering available further down the pyramid. But moving down the pyramid, how far do you go? Where do your strengths align with the market?”

ASHLEY WILLIAMS, CEO AND CLO, UVA DARDEN EXECUTIVE EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Opportunity for business schools to operate as academic entrepreneurs.



“Let’s be academic entrepreneurs because we don’t know how this market is going to play out. But there is going to be a window of opportunity over the next three to five years. We need to figure out the market segment needs, map learner journeys, and pivot appropriately with the right product offerings. The world is big enough and there are going to be incredible prospects for innovators in the future.”

RAJ ECHAMBADI, PRESIDENT, ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

INNOVATION

Opportunities to innovate and build new value—as presented by the potential adoption of lifelong learning as a strategy.

COLLABORATION

Cross-school, cross-discipline—many of the toughest problems facing business today require interdisciplinary solutions (e.g. between ‘supply chain’ and ‘robotics’ experts).

“The future has to be much more collaboration. Lifelong learning should imply a combination of technical skills upgrading—which we all need to keep familiar with, and which could be quite democratized in terms of where the best expertise and providers are—and then particularly for more senior people there will be deeper learning, and the value of individuals coming together. Those more informal and strategic skills, culture change, these are more complex to deliver—and that’s where perhaps the big brands still have a differential advantage.”

ANDREW JACK, GLOBAL EDUCATION EDITOR, FINANCIAL TIMES

“Cross-school collaboration within the university. There was a period when business schools did not want to collaborate with, the hard sciences, for example, or the engineering school, or arts. But the more cross-pollination, cross-fertilization that occurs will be key to future success because most of the big, most vexing problems for corporations are interdisciplinary problems.”

MIKE MALEFAKIS, SENIOR ADVISOR, LEEDS ILLUMINATE



PARTNERSHIPS

Universities are positioned well to orchestrate a wide variety of potential partnerships; cross-industry, EdTech, ecosystems, consortia.

“Business schools don’t have to do everything all by themselves, they need to become orchestrators of the learning ecosystem. Continue doing the things that they do well and leverage intelligent partnerships. No technology infrastructure? That’s okay. Outsource for a fee. 10% of a grapefruit is still far bigger than 100% of a grape.”

RAJ ECHAMBADI, PRESIDENT, ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

“We need to go more toward just-in-time learning, and finding good partners is the way to do that. There are structural impediments to being agile, and the only way to work around those impediments is to find partners you can build a trusting relationship with.”

MIKE MALEFAKIS, SENIOR ADVISOR, LEEDS ILLUMINATE

“The online space has dramatically reduced the costs of collaboration between university partners.”

NICK BARNVILLE, ASSOCIATE DEAN OF DEGREE PROGRAMS AND DIRECTOR OF EDTECH LAB, ESMT BERLIN, ‘MICROCREDENTIALS: CONNECTING BUSINESS SCHOOLS AND BUSINESS THROUGH LIFELONG LEARNING’, AN AACSB BRIEFING PAPER AUGUST 2021

MARKET DRIVEN

University-based executive education content is traditionally supply-led. Opportunity to develop for market needs, with data-gathering, experimentation, and iteration.

“Out of necessity, the rigidity of university HR systems and policies were designed to serve a centuries old model of degree teaching. Executive education, non-degree and lifelong learning will have to operate more like tech companies do now, rather than continue as academic institutions do. The market place is going to be consistently evolving with great speed, much faster than the degreed side of the institution.”

MIKE MALEFAKIS, SENIOR ADVISOR, LEEDS ILLUMINATE



“Education is now having to be far more responsive and relevant. With that comes great opportunities, but also some challenges. I think supply side education is still very much the norm, and increasingly, will need to become less the norm. Demand side is very much the up and coming.”

TOM HUNSAKER, ASSOCIATE DEAN OF INNOVATION, THUNDERBIRD SCHOOL OF GLOBAL MANAGEMENT

BUSINESS MODEL INNOVATION

New models such as (but not limited to) memberships and subscriptions to one or multiple institutions.

“We could create memberships—maybe this could be in partnerships. You could see a consortium of schools and possibly consulting firms or other kinds of organizations, providing a set of learning experiences. When it comes to the business model, as with our Alumni Advantage program, it could be tuition free for degree students who pay a lot for their education, and really ought to look to us to continue their learning journey.”

MELANIE WEAVER BARNETT, CHIEF EXECUTIVE EDUCATION OFFICER, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

EMBRACE RISK

Opportunity for smaller schools in particular to be agile, embrace risk, and innovate quicker than larger competitors.

“Smaller schools need to be more agile and more risk embracing in order to maintain the pace, and as a result may be more innovative here than the ‘Premier League’ schools.”

MIKE MALEFAKIS, SENIOR ADVISOR, LEEDS ILLUMINATE

“Given that traditional universities, and especially the elite research universities, are historically slow to adopt and innovate, it offers great opportunity to innovative Exec Ed type programs which can offer not a one-time five day course, but lifelong offerings spread over years with



just-in-time needed educational offerings. This can also be accompanied by innovative lifetime subscription type revenue models.”

JERRY WIND, PROFESSOR OF MARKETING AT THE WHARTON SCHOOL, IN ‘EXECUTIVE EDUCATION AFTER THE PANDEMIC’, EDITED BY SANTIAGO IÑIGUEZ DE ONZOÑO AND PETER LORANGE

COACHING

The recent growth and development in coaching capabilities provides tools and mechanisms for continual development.

“Something we’re working on is coaching and having a coaching practice in executive education. We offer coaches to our executive program participants as part of a follow-up or even during the program itself, and as a stand-alone as well. We’re working on offering that to our degree program alumni as well (though that won’t be free). The coaching process is another way to ensure continued development right through.”

MELANIE WEAVER BARNETT, CHIEF EXECUTIVE EDUCATION OFFICER, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

TECHNOLOGY

Opportunities to leverage of new technologies (e.g. simulations in AR and VR environments).

“Online simulated learning experiences are going to get more and more sophisticated. Many companies are investing in Oculus headsets and doing their onboarding program that way. I recently reviewed a virtual reality learning experience on giving performance feedback. It’s pretty good. This type of learning is already being adopted to some extent and will happen more and more, and even for more complex learning situations. You can imagine those being much like video games, where you work through a learning experience over a long period of time, with other people competing with you, and all kinds of new scenarios hitting you along the way. The difference I’m thinking about here is that



it's virtual-reality based. You're not just seeing a picture and making a decision by hitting a key, for example; you're virtually in the meeting, and you have to negotiate and create a deal with different parties."

MELANIE WEAVER BARNETT, CHIEF EXECUTIVE EDUCATION OFFICER,
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

"Moving away from the view of LMS as this big, long, boring page turner, e-learning modules and calling that technology-enabled learning. The tech has changed. What is coming on the market, and is available to us to design different types of experiences for our employees, didn't exist seven years ago. Collaborative learning, learning experience platforms, the ability for employees to have a more personalized experience with bite sized learning to build skills as they need them, to technology platforms that support coaching. Fundamentally, we're changing the way we design learning."

JULIE DERVIN, GLOBAL HEAD OF CORPORATE LEARNING & ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, CARGILL

NETWORKED COMMUNITIES

Opportunity to develop 'communities of learners'—with lifelong learners networked together, providing valuable data and feedback to providers.

"Imagine future programs designed to create and sustain a community of learners with the commitment to share their experiences and the lessons from their experiments. Having such a network will generate the data on what works and doesn't work and allow for continuous meta-analysis and the development of useful empirical generalizations for the benefit of all. [...] An intriguing and most appropriate vision for this area is offered by Wilfried Vanhonacker, who sees it as a 'co-learning ecosystem' (involving students, faculty and others) governed by an intelligent backbone that tracks the development and honing of unique capabilities."

JERRY WIND, PROFESSOR OF MARKETING AT THE WHARTON SCHOOL, IN
'EXECUTIVE EDUCATION AFTER THE PANDEMIC', EDITED BY SANTIAGO IÑIGUEZ
DE ONZOÑO AND PETER LORANGE



“25% of learners are very interested in communities of learners that enable continued peer learning beyond formal studies.”

'THE FUTURE OF LIFELONG AND EXECUTIVE EDUCATION', CARRINGTON CRISP AND LINKEDIN, JULY 2021

“We’ve built a digital learning champion network. At this point over 600 employees all across Cargill businesses globally. My team works as success coaches and engages them as a network to show them how to use the tools, how to set up learning pathways. It’s part community of practice, part, we’re going to build your capabilities to own your own learning within your businesses.”

JULIE DERVIN, GLOBAL HEAD OF CORPORATE LEARNING & ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, CARGILL

APPLIED LEARNING

Ability for learners to immediately apply learning to their daily work—where practice in the field has a proven multiplier effect.

“In a digital learning experience, we have been able to shape what we call application challenges, or missions. Smaller bites of learning, as the learner is ready to engage with it. They have the concept introduced to them, they have new frameworks and models that support the concept. Now, your assignment in this next week is to go back into the business, back in your role, and build this model or have these conversations and then come back and record how it went and be ready to showcase what you did. It’s more application based, serving the same purpose as roleplay but really in the business, doing the work.”

JULIE DERVIN, GLOBAL HEAD OF CORPORATE LEARNING & ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, CARGILL

“I see three main pillars for lifelong learning. One—the attitude or mindset and how highly motivated one is towards staying up-to-date, employability, acquiring new skills—that’s the individual level. The second part is what people are bringing in from their degree programs, from school, but also from their ability to adapt, which kind of mental tools and processes they are used to using when thinking. The third pillar is practice. You have the fundamentals, which you can teach,



along with process methods, tools, and the basic structure that allows you to learn and to grow, plus you then add practice as a multiplier and the opportunity to work in the field—multiplied by the attitude and the mindset. This is lifelong learning.”

DR. MARTIN HOFMANN, HEAD OF HR DIGITALIZATION, HR SERVICES & RECRUITING VOLKSWAGEN GROUP

“Imagine a world in which the successful completion of a program, and its coveted certificate, will be only after proof of successful application of the learnings in a real-world experiment. The added benefit of such an approach is enhancing the value of experimentation, which is key to success in a turbulent environment.”

JERRY WIND, PROFESSOR OF MARKETING AT THE WHARTON SCHOOL, IN ‘EXECUTIVE EDUCATION AFTER THE PANDEMIC’, EDITED BY SANTIAGO IÑIGUEZ DE ONZOÑO AND PETER LORANGE

ACADEMIC-CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

Opportunity to support internal corporate learning initiatives and corporate universities (e.g. to add cutting-edge research, teaching or credentialing).

“The skills landscape is evolving rapidly. Those capabilities which have been traditionally core competence for us as insurers—distribution, underwriting, pricing—are still foundational today. But there are new capabilities required that are becoming just as, or even more important. Skills in the domains of data science, and digital technology, and cybersecurity, for example did not exist 20 years ago, and yet, it seems that these and others will be key to the ongoing success of many organizations.

We want to ensure we have access to those skills either in the marketplace, or even better, through growing our own talent. Through our learning experience platform we deliver skills in data science, technology, digital, etc where we support employees who see their career evolving that way, and we help them achieve qualifications, often with university partners, in some of these technical skills.”

MICHAEL MOLINARO, CLO, NEW YORK LIFE



THREATS

MARKET COMPETITION

SECONDARY THREATS/FAIL POINTS



THREATS

MARKET COMPETITION

Threats posed by traditional/non-traditional competition and outside market conditions—around a strategy of lifelong learning.

BEHIND EDTECH

University-based business schools may possess less advanced digital capabilities and market visibility in this space than some competitors (e.g. in EdTech).

“The education technology market size was valued at USD 254.80 billion in 2021 and is expected to reach USD 605.40 billion by 2027.”

ARIZTON ADVISORY & INTELLIGENCE

FACULTY LOSSES

Non-traditional competitors may outbid schools for teaching contracts.

“One day the [large EdTech companies] might say, you know what? We can do it ourselves—and go and pay the professor directly.”

ILIAN MIHOV, DEAN, INSEAD

INEXPERIENCE

University-based executive education has not traditionally offered just-in-time learning, nor highly specific hard skills (e.g. cyber-security testing, or product management).



“How do universities get into the just-in-time learning focus that many corporations are asking for right now? We have not played well in that space. Individual faculty are breaking off and trying to deliver their own content in that space.”

MIKE MALEFAKIS, SENIOR ADVISOR, LEEDS ILLUMINATE

GENERATIONAL APPEAL

Doubts as to whether younger generations coming into management roles will turn to university brands for quick upskilling.

“The risk for universities is, is there is enough demand? Especially if we look at the generation that is soon to be in middle, upper middle and senior level executive positions. Where do they turn to for sources of quick upskilling. I don’t think they think of universities, they will be going to various apps that they’re already using.”

MIKE MALEFAKIS, SENIOR ADVISOR, LEEDS ILLUMINATE

MARKET HEAT-UP

Risk of a sudden and unexpected heating up of the market—e.g. the smart phone boom—leaving providers under-prepared.

“At this point, we don’t feel there are strong threats out in the market, because nobody’s really putting a very a strong drive behind this lifelong learning concept. It may be that lifelong learning is getting hot, all of a sudden, very, very quickly. So that can be a potential threat. But I don’t know whether that’s going to happen, it’s just one possibility. Everybody’s going slowly and watching what everybody else is doing and trying to keep abreast but try not to fall behind.”

KAN CAI, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, TSINGHUA UNIVERSITY PBCSF



CORPORATE COMPETITION

The threat of large organizations filling the gap in the market—bypassing business schools to offer qualifications to learners freshly out of school (e.g. a certificate at Google leading to full-time employment).

“[Existing examples...] IBM Digital Badge Program, Google Career Certificates, EY Badges, Salesforce Trailhead”

‘MICROCREDENTIALS: CONNECTING BUSINESS SCHOOLS AND BUSINESS THROUGH LIFELONG LEARNING’, AN AACSB BRIEFING PAPER AUGUST 2021

“There is a dark side to this for business schools. Industry players have sometimes said that there is no ROI. We are seeing people like Google saying—come directly into an IT certificate from high school and we will hire you. To me, the grave danger is if we don’t fulfil this social compact with society by connecting the education and the employment pieces, which business schools are well poised to do.”

RAJ ECHAMBADI, PRESIDENT, ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

AGGREGATION

Partnering with platform companies may dilute individual providers’ ability to differentiate and attract new audiences.

“Platform companies are analogous to a mall, and partner schools become stores within a mall. The fear is that platforms have more bargaining power. But they have global reach and can help us discover new global opportunities. This is where points of differentiation matter. What are you excellent at? How do you play to your strengths? What market will find you appealing? Those are things we have never had to worry about because we were focused on space-based competition. Now? We need to.”

RAJ ECHAMBADI, PRESIDENT, ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY



COMPETITOR CREDENTIALING

The threat that non-traditional competitors develop credentialing power.

“[Existing examples...] edX MicroBachelors® and MicroMasters®, Udacity Nanodegrees, Coursera Course Certificates”

‘MICROCREDENTIALS: CONNECTING BUSINESS SCHOOLS AND BUSINESS THROUGH LIFELONG LEARNING’, AN AACSB BRIEFING PAPER AUGUST 2021

“Our unique advantage is credentialing—and university credentialing is quality monitoring. A lot of third parties can provide quality education, but most can’t provide a valued credential. If they do a phenomenal job over time, is there a point where the audience says, why am I going to a university and taking that course? Why can’t I go to this third party which understands learner journeys, engages excellently, and is valued by the market. That is a potential threat for us as we can be locked out of an ever-expanding lifelong learning market. We need to move into that space.”

RAJ ECHAMBADI, PRESIDENT, ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

“The competitive set is very different from what it was when I started in this field and it’s going to get even more varied as these micro credentials and other kinds of learning credentials become accepted in the marketplace. It’ll be interesting to see does a LinkedIn course hold similar value to a similarly titled course from, you know, Harvard University? Maybe not, maybe the university brands still hold sway. But that could change.”

MELANIE WEAVER BARNETT, CHIEF EXECUTIVE EDUCATION OFFICER,
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

MACHINE LEARNING

Machine learning and AI promises greater personalization and curation of content—and the threat that university-based providers’ curation expertise is bypassed.

“Many organizations I’m sure struggle with this: there’s so much content. We have to continue down this path of increased personalization, and the only way we can do that is through having good data, and starting



advantage of more intelligent technologies that can use the data to serve up the right content to the right people at the right time.”

JULIE DERVIN, GLOBAL HEAD OF CORPORATE LEARNING & ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, CARGILL

“I think some organizations have pockets of success, where for a certain initiative, in a certain job family, they’ve been able to use AI and data to create a very highly personalized experience for their learners. I have yet to come across any organization that has figured the whole organizational learning space out, and that hyper personalization and that use of AI and machine learning to enable that. It’s a space where we’re all learning as we go.”

JULIE DERVIN, GLOBAL HEAD OF CORPORATE LEARNING & ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, CARGILL

SELF-SUSTAINMENT

Corporate in-house learning provision is increasingly sophisticated, with access to faculty, technology, and content.

“We take our learning very seriously, and leaders take their development and learning very seriously. You can see that in how people engage with the learning and how they engage with my team, and how they pick up the tools that are very easy to use. It doesn’t require a learning designer or professional anymore to do it.”

JULIE DERVIN, GLOBAL HEAD OF CORPORATE LEARNING & ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, CARGILL

“You could see lifelong learning as sometimes being fragmented. People have so many opportunities, you could see organizations taking a role in helping people decide on and craft their learning plan. Then maybe learning experts become more important in organizations. Maybe you have a whole cadre of learning experts and you are assigned a learning expert to meet with and help you craft your plan.”

MELANIE WEAVER BARNETT, CHIEF EXECUTIVE EDUCATION OFFICER,
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS



“Our digital learning backbone is very much user driven. Whereas in the past we would have course writers and instructional designers, I now have a team of curators who source content and curate content for our employees. What we offer and who provides it is very much learner led. And yet, there are still some learnings we want to be directive about because we think it’s important. But the shift to learner-directed is meaningful. If it was 90/10 organization directed in the past, it’s probably 50/50 now.”

MICHAEL MOLINARO, CLO, NEW YORK LIFE

DEVALUATION

As learning opportunities become more ubiquitous and low cost, there comes a threat that the perceived value of university-based executive education decreases.

“I think the threats to business schools are that they could become less and less important, and less and less premier in the marketplace, as the learning opportunities become ubiquitous and less and less expensive.”

MELANIE WEAVER BARNETT, CHIEF EXECUTIVE EDUCATION OFFICER,
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

“More than half (58%) of employees agree that the growing provision of learning and development content on platforms outside higher education makes them question the value of formal university programmes.”

‘THE FUTURE OF LIFELONG AND EXECUTIVE EDUCATION’, CARRINGTON CRISP
AND LINKEDIN, JULY 2021

C-SUITE BUY-IN

Successful scaling of lifelong learning in organizations will require senior leadership buy-in and a focus on the question of ROI.

“I think at the level of the CLOs, yes [they are talking about lifelong learning]. Whether they then have as much budget or buy in from the



C-Suites is more open to question. How effectively can they make the case for the ROI on that?”

ANDREW JACK, GLOBAL EDUCATION EDITOR, FINANCIAL TIMES

SECONDARY THREATS/FAIL POINTS

Foreseeable knock-on negative effects and potential fail points—to potential adoption of lifelong learning as a strategy for university-based business schools.

RESEARCH SLOWDOWN

Slowing effect on research generation with professors disengaged from thought leadership while concentrated on an increased teaching load.

“The issue is that if [large EdTech companies] start doing this more and more professors disengage, so instead of actually doing the research, they just do more of this teaching. That could be an issue for the system. The intellectual knowledge creation will slow down. A lot of schools are concerned about this—that it slows down knowledge.”

ILIAN MIHOV, DEAN, INSEAD

SLOGANEERING

The threat that lifelong learning could be used as a slogan—with a lack of real change behind it, operating as an aspirational goal only.

“Right now, a weakness is around acceptance. At this point, it’s a trend, but it’s something in the future, it’s not a very urgent need. So some may write it off as unimportant, or they say it’s important, but don’t put money where their mouth is. You have to turn people’s minds gradually. I think that takes time and takes education for people to realize how important this thing is. We have to educate the market and educate our customers.”

KAN CAI, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, TSINGHUA UNIVERSITY PBCSF



“Many schools and corporations are using the slogan lifelong learning. But if truly pressed, what have you changed from what you used to do other than we now have a larger catalogue of online courses? I don’t think many could actually articulate concrete changes they’ve made. So it’s an aspirational goal—and it’s one we should applaud as it is setting a North Star that we should all work towards.”

MIKE MALEFAKIS, SENIOR ADVISOR, LEEDS ILLUMINATE

OVER-EXTENSION

There is a risk that providers over-extend—with too many products, and too broad an audience segment.

“You don’t want to be all things to all people. Look at the whole market, see the slice of the market you care about, and create product offerings that fit that particular market and go from there.”

RAJ ECHAMBADI, PRESIDENT, ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

SCALE VS. SOCIAL GOOD

Balancing the opportunity of scale and new revenues with the opportunity to achieve a social good.

“The technologies are aligning in ways that weren’t previously available. The need, and the appetite is certainly there. That’s the half full part. The half empty part is, there’s still lots of incentives that might keep people from doing it the right way. The incentives can align to make people want to do it in the right kinds of ways.”

TOM HUNSAKER, ASSOCIATE DEAN OF INNOVATION, THUNDERBIRD SCHOOL OF GLOBAL MANAGEMENT

“The natural response is, how to make it more scalable. Then there’s that classical sense of education as a social good. A lot of people are grappling with that. If all education comes to look like another



exclusively customer driven corporate entity, then it will lose some of the social aspects that aren't necessarily accounted for."

TOM HUNSAKER, ASSOCIATE DEAN OF INNOVATION, THUNDERBIRD SCHOOL OF GLOBAL MANAGEMENT

WORKDAY STRUCTURE

Lifelong learning requires that people are given time and space to learn, self-direct, and reflect—what does this mean for the traditional workday?

FRAGMENTATION

With a broad range of new opportunities comes the risk that learning becomes fragmented. Compatibility and portability of credentials will be key.

TIME AND WELL-BEING

What are the implications of increased time/effort demands and additional screen time on already busy learners?

"One possible barrier is just that as adult learners we're all so busy. Partly individuals take ownership of their learning but it's also something leaders in the organizations need to figure out and make adjustments for, in order that people actually have time to learn—whether in formal learning or informal learning."

MELANIE WEAVER BARNETT, CHIEF EXECUTIVE EDUCATION OFFICER,
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

QUALITY CONTROL

Quality control will be key to retaining the premium quality assurances closely associated with top business school brands.



DEEP LEARNING USP

The USP of university-based executive education has long centred around deep reflection and 'life-changing' moments—elements that are not easily scaled.

This report has been produced by IEDP in association with AACSB and UNICON.

IEDP has been reporting on the global provision of executive education and development for the past 20 years.

By promoting the latest research, thought-leadership, and executive programs delivered by the world's leading business schools, IEDP seeks to improve performance and expand learning horizons for our international corporate audience—while furthering the reach and impact of the executive development sector as a whole.

Bridging the academic and corporate worlds, IEDP aims to support progress, facilitate dialogue, and drive innovation using our market research and intelligence gathering.

IEDP also specializes in thought-leadership development, content marketing, and marketing strategy for university-based business schools.

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